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Press Release

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TRADOC leadership updates Soldiers on new initiatives

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CHIÈVRES, Belgium – “Supporting an Army at War” and “Our Bench for Tomorrow Starts Here” were two major themes addressed by leaders of the U.S. Army Training and Doctrine Command during their recent visit to the SHAPE/Chièvres area.

Gen. William S. Wallace, TRADOC commanding general, and his top noncommissioned officer, Command Sgt. Maj. John D. Sparks, briefed Soldiers and civilians assigned within the Benelux footprint on current and future programs that will impact the entire Army.

Wallace said: “We at TRADOC believe that victory starts at TRADOC. It is not that we fight the fight, but it starts at our centers, schools, classrooms and ranges across (the command). This is where the foundation of our great Army comes. It is the location where all Soldiers, regardless of rank, is assigned at some time or another in their career, whether their training has just begun or their education is (being) advanced.”

“TRADOC,” he added, “is the architect of the Army and is thinking of what the future of our Army should be like.”

While Wallace spoke at Caserne Daumerie, Sparks informed Soldiers at SHAPE on similar topics, especially the fact that the tempo for new recruits has changed with Initial Entry Training.

“IET now focuses on preparing Soldiers for arrival at their first unit,” Sparks said.

Previously, the emphasis was on Soldierization and Military Occupational Specialties' technical skills, but the focus of training today, TRADOC's command sergeant noted, is on the skills and battle drills "required to fight and survive in combat."

TRADOC, he said, is preparing Soldiers to contribute immediately upon arrival to the field because "within six months of graduation, about half of the Soldiers will be going to units that are deployed or will soon deploy."

Such initiatives, however, don't affect new Soldiers only; all levels of the Noncommissioned Officer Education System are seeing changes as well with TRADOC's training schedules going to a six-day work week, Sparks said.

Hearing groans from the audience, he stressed this point: "We are trying to ensure NCOs are trained when they are supposed to (without having) to spend as much time away from their Families between deployments. By finishing training sooner, they have more time to recharge their batteries and get some quality family time."

He said that NCOES transformation will: embrace career-long learning; stay relevant to an Army at war; support a modular force; create a joint and expeditionary mindset; develop NCOs who can successfully lead Soldiers into combat; capitalize on Soldier experience; incorporate Warrior Tasks and Battle Drills; and leverage technology.

"The role of the NCO is changing," Sparks said. "We need to assess our culture and how the NCO supports our future Army."

He then touched on AL21, or Army Leaders for the 21st Century, an initiative developed after TRADOC surveyed and interviewed more than 2,600 Soldiers, reviewed lessons-learned reports and received input from senior leaders.

Out of AL21 comes "The NCO Pentathlete," Sparks said, "who is effective in any environment and proficient in all aspects of being a Soldier."

Sparks said this vision calls for an NCO who is "an innovative, competent professional enlisted leader grounded in heritage, values and tradition that embodies Warrior Ethos; champions continuous learning; and is capable of leading, training and motivating Soldiers.

"AL21 calls for an adaptive leader who is proficient in joint and combined expeditionary warfare and continuous, simultaneous full spectrum operations, and is resilient to uncertain and ambiguous environments."

Sparks also provided insight into a new initiative called "Warrior University" and the "Army Career Tracker," which provides every Soldier with an accurate, individualized career roadmap. It is a system that allows for Soldiers, as they finish various stages of training during their careers, to be automatically rewarded with college credits. When the program is fully implemented, Soldiers will have 128 different colleges to choose from where to obtain a degree in their Army profession.

WALLACE

During his visit to the U.S. Army Garrison Benelux Headquarters, Gen. William S. Wallace, U.S. Army Training and Doctrine Command commanding general, spoke with senior Army and civilian leaders. (Photo by Steven Hoover)

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